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Mineral King Plans Rapped

Times

Much has been written in regards to the proposed development by Walt Disney Productions at Mineral King. Having hiked and camped in the area for many years, and being ardent skiers, we must register our disapproval of the present plan to place a \$35 million development in this small Sierra Nevada valley.

Walt Disney viewed Mineral King as a utopia which would provide something for everyone; from fishermen, back-packers, campers and skiers to those merely seeking respite from the noise and crowds of the city. Mineral King is simply not large enough for the planned development.

Much has changed since Walt Disney first submitted his plans for the development. All campsites in the valley have been eliminated from the plans; ski experts have determined that the steep terrain will provide primarily advanced skiing; snow experts have been unable to control the avalanches which have plagued the valley throughout history; and it seems obvious that the crowds which are anticipated will jam the proposed two-lane road.



It has been argued that at present Mineral King is hardly used because of its inaccessibility. However, last summer some 24,000 people enjoyed the valley. Since this is publicly owned land, should it not be available to the public at no cost? We feel it should.

We feel the campgrounds should be expanded, not eliminated, and the public should not have to pay for parking, for a ride on a tram and then for accommodations at hotel rates.

Have the taxpayers been considered? We feel they have not. The access road will cost a minimum of \$23 million and the money is scheduled to come from the gas taxes of Los Angeles, Ventura and Orange counties where there are already pressing highway needs.

As skiers, we realize the need for added ski facilities in this state, especially in Southern California. We believe Mineral King should be made accessible for winter recreation, but the \$3 million development originally proposed by the Forest Service would be more in keeping with the limited area of the valley.

In our view, the latter modest development would provide added recreational facilities, and at the same time preserve the primitive beauty of the area. This would be, in a real sense, a tribute to Walt Disney, who after all, was a conservationist.

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